

MVTV Update on Projects, Plans and Activities February 2011

License Renewal:

Comcast currently operates throughout Martha's Vineyard under License Agreements that expire this year. Comcast reportedly serves nearly 10,000 subscribers in Martha's Vineyard.

During renewal proceedings, the Towns may identify basic requirements for cable system capacity, functionality, and customer service, and require cable operators to provide -- among other things -- facilities, equipment and channels for Public, Educational, and Government (PEG) Access.

MVTV was created as a result of the contract negotiations that took place 10 years ago between the 6 towns on Martha's Vineyard and Adelphia Cable Corporation.

This time around MVTV can act as a partner to the towns in the renewal process. To that end, MVTV hired the services of The Buske Group to conduct a needs assessment of the Island of Martha's Vineyard. The needs assessment included six focus group sessions, an online and paper survey, review of the current equipment, facilities and services provided by MVTV. In addition there was a statistically valid phone survey conducted and a series of public meetings held for the up island and down island towns.

Here are some facts gathered by this process:

- 20.5 hours of original content produced at MVTV every week.
- MVTV has 251 active members and 561 inactive members. Members may be inactive due to lapse in membership or seasonal residency.
- MVTV added a video on demand feature on mvtv.org in 2009. This service enables anyone with Internet access to view MVTV programming through our website.

Phone survey:

- 1) 73% of households subscribe to Comcast and 20% subscribe to satellite (Dish Network or Directv)
- 2) 56% of respondents watch MVTV with 30% watching MVTV 1-6 times per week.
- 3) Nearly half of respondents (47%) believe that it is very important to have local, noncommercial cable channels that feature programs about Martha's Vineyard residents, organizations, schools, government, events and issues.
- 4) Respondents would like to see more community programming on MVTV channels. Some popular types of programming include community events, local election related information, local arts, history and cultural programming, local theatre and programming from the Island schools.

Subscriber Contact with Comcast

Subscribers were asked to report the number of times they called Comcast in the past twelve months to resolve various issues. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of subscribers called Comcast customer service to resolve at least one problem in the past year. The highest percentage of respondents called for

- loss of service/signal (57%)
- problems with cable equipment (35%)
- billing problems (24%)
- poor reception (16%)
- other issues (14%).

The highest annual average number of times called was for

- poor reception (3.5 calls/year on average),
- loss of service/signal (3.0 calls/year on average),
- billing problems (2.7 calls/year on average),
- problems with cable equipment (2.0 calls/year on average), and
- other issues (1.3 calls/year on average).

In the focus group sessions:

- 89% of all subscriber-respondents watch MVTV
- Over 75% said they found out about MVTV programming by channel surfing
- 43% of respondents said that MVTV facilities did not meet their needs and the most often suggested improvements to the facility were “bathrooms”, “classroom/training space” and “portable cameras with more advanced capability”.
- Our nearest bathroom is at the high school, a 451-foot walk from our facility.

Overall Satisfaction with Comcast Cable Television

Twenty-three percent of respondents (23%) report that they are very satisfied with Comcast cable television, while 47 percent are somewhat satisfied, 15 percent are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 11 percent are somewhat dissatisfied, and 4 percent are very dissatisfied.

Next Steps For MVTV

In order to meet documented community needs and interests MVTV looks to expand in the next 10 years and transform into a community media center. MVTV’s Proposal for Future Funding and Service describes how we plan to improve our traditional services and add new services.

A couple of goals that motivate our planned projects:

- To increase our capacity by building a larger facility,
- To improve and expand our classes and training opportunities,
- To increase membership,
- To improve production quality on our three channels and
- To ensure a wider viewership of the content produced at MVTV.

Highlights of some of MVTV’s planned projects and improvements:

Government Meeting Coverage

- Plan to install robotic equipment in each town hall
- Plan to provide towns with a predictable playback schedule on MVTV Channel 15
- In addition to playback on channels we plan to provide streaming live on the internet.

Community Bulletin Board

MVTV’s channels carry a common community bulletin board available to Vineyard

nonprofit organizations and community groups. Currently the bulletin board is used to publicize activities, events and announcements relevant to the Vineyard Community.

MVTV plans to add two additional bulletin board systems so that each channel will have its own unique messages. Examples of messages that could air on each channel include:

Government Channel 15:

- Photos and bios of elected officials and Town staff
- Town offices with phone numbers
- Town notices about meeting locations, special town meetings, water conditions, etc.
- Safety tips provided by the fire and police departments

Education Channel 14:

- School lunch menus
- Photos of youth art including paintings, photographs, ceramics, etc.
- School announcements
- Photos and bios of teachers and administration staff

Community Channel 13:

- Announcements from nonprofit organizations
- Vineyard photographs provided by members of the community

Expansion of Services:

Some examples of additional services that we plan to provide the Martha's Vineyard Community are:

- 1) Social Media Classes
- 2) Digital Storytelling
- 3) Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations
- 4) Web Media
- 5) Internships
- 6) Youth Summer Video Camps
- 7) Increase in Production Services

I plan to increase the staffing at MVTV in order to accomplish this increase in services. Hiring the staff will be gradual and will, most likely take place after contract negotiations are complete.

MVTV Budget

Recently, there has been scrutiny of our \$450,000 reserve fund. This fund was built up over time. MVTV was able to transfer between \$60,000 and \$100,000 from our operation revenues to this fund.

\$30,000 - Contingency Fund

\$420,000 - for Capital Improvements

We have an immediate need for \$90,000 in equipment replacement/upgrades at the MVTV facility. Installation of robotic equipment will be \$25,000 per town, which is a total of \$150,000.

Ballpark figures for expansion of current facility could be between \$450,000 and \$500,000.

In total, we're still about \$320,000 short of what we need in order to make the necessary improvements to our equipment and facilities for this year.

Facilities and Equipment

MVTV's current 1,560 square foot facility is located on the grounds of the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School. **A huge demand exists for more space. Specifically, rest room facilities, a training room, a minimum of 4 separate edit bays, a meeting room, a hot-studio, larger space for master control equipment and staff offices.** MVTV's current facility does not have a bathroom. MVTV staff, guests and members walk 450 feet one way to the nearest bathroom, located in the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School.

The lack of restroom facilities limits activities at MVTV and makes participation by persons with physical disabilities and older persons much more difficult. It also raises safety concerns during evening taping and meeting activities.

Questions are always welcome!

Thank you!

Sincerely,
Julienne Turner
Executive Director